

## **UAEM intervention at Open Ended Meeting on follow up to the CEWG report, Tuesday 3rd May, 15.00**

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to address the distinguished delegates. I am speaking on behalf of the many students involved in Universities Allied for Essential Medicines.

I was born in 1994. This was the year the TRIPS agreement was negotiated. For my entire lifetime people have been dying because they do not have access to the medicines they need. And for more than half of my life *you*, the World Health Organisation, have been discussing this and have given the mandate to several working groups to “explore innovative approaches to ensuring access to medicines for people most in need”. Progress has been painfully slow and meanwhile patients continue to suffer and die.

This is no longer an issue only for low and middle income countries, this is a global issue affecting all countries. Sustainable, systemic and global solutions for all types of diseases are needed **now** to address the root causes of the existing access and innovation crises.

The recommendations of the CEWG clearly called for a global legally-binding framework to ensure sustainable funding and coordination of R&D. This last weekend, hundreds of students from all over Europe gathered to call for a new approach to biomedical R&D that focuses on **patients** and their **needs**, not profits. Over 450 academics including 4 Nobel Laureates also sent a letter to this open ended meeting supporting an R&D Agreement.

We are convinced a systemic and sustainable solution will be only achieved if the current initiatives come together under a unifying framework. UAEM recently reviewed 81 alternative biomedical R&D models including the CEWG demonstration projects. The mapping shows that what we have is a fragmented and disconnected landscape of initiatives. The fragmented approach is clearly not working. Systemic change is needed to implement a new way of doing biomedical R&D to ensure access for all.

After all these years of discussion and the tragedies that we have witnessed, the urgency to act is evident. The issue being discussed today goes far beyond R&D funding, prioritization and coordination; it is about meeting the health needs of people worldwide and making the right to health a reality.

We therefore urge all Member States to seriously address this issue. For us, as the future generation, this is an urgent moral issue. We cannot afford to delay the discussion of an R&D Agreement any more, we cannot afford that the Observatory is almost the only outcome from this meeting presented at the WHA.

We call on you, the member states, to set out a clear process for a Framework on R&D that advances rapidly alongside the important work of the UN High Level Panel on access to medicines.

Thank you.